

News Release
U.S. Department of Justice
United States Attorney
District of Rhode Island

March 28, 2005



Central Falls man is charged with federal firearms offense in shooting incident outside a nightclub

Raul Soto, of Central Falls, has been charged in a federal complaint with being a felon in possession of a firearm in connection with a March 5 incident outside a Providence nightclub. Providence Police arrested Soto at 4:00 AM yesterday in Olneyville after checking the occupants of a vehicle in which he was riding and discovering that there was a federal warrant for his arrest.

United States Attorney Robert Clark Corrente, Thomas H. Wlodyka, Resident Agent in Charge of the Providence Office of the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives, and Colonel Dean Esserman, Chief of the Providence Police Department, jointly announced the complaint, which was lodged on March 18 in U.S. District Court, Providence.

According to an ATF affidavit supporting the complaint, at about 2:00 AM on March 5, Providence Police officers were attempting to disburse a crowd in front of Club Pulse at 86 Crary Street, when they observed two men fighting. As the officers approached, they heard gunshots and one of them saw a man holding a black pistol.

After taking cover, the officers heard additional gunshots and one of them saw a muzzle flash from a window of a gold Honda Accord as it pulled away from the scene. Officers pursued the Accord, which went out of control and came to rest near Allens Avenue. According to the

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affidavit, the driver, later identified as Soto, refused orders to exit the vehicle and show his left hand. Officers arrested Soto and seized a black, .40-caliber pistol from under the driver's seat, where Soto's hand had been.

ATF agents subsequently reviewed the incident with Providence Police and, on March 18, the U.S. Attorney's Office filed the complaint and a warrant was issued for Soto's arrest.

After arresting Soto in Olneyville Sunday morning, Providence Police turned him over to ATF custody. Soto, 29, of 23 Tiffany Street, Central Falls, is scheduled to appear at 2:00 PM today before Magistrate Judge David L. Martin in U.S. District Court.

ATF investigated the case as part of **Project Safe Neighborhoods**, a Department of Justice initiative against gun crimes. Under Project Safe Neighborhoods, the U.S. Attorney's Office, working with Providence Police, the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives, the Rhode Island Attorney General's Office, and other agencies, aggressively prosecutes federal firearms offenses in an effort to incarcerate those responsible for gun violence and deter others from committing gun crimes. Since 2001, federal firearms prosecutions in Rhode Island have more than doubled and gun offenders have been sentenced to a total of more than 550 years in federal prison.

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Contact: 401-709-5032

Thomas.connell@usdoj.gov